

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

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USIA-06 CU-02 AID-05 SNM-02 DEAE-00 IO-10 /072 W

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R 291005Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8479

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR MY AS

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS VISIT TO MALAYSIA CAUSE CONCERN

REF: KL 4224

1. SUMMARY: AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION FEARS THAT VISITS BY APPROX 10,000 AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS DURING CURRENT UNIVERSITY RECESS MAY RESULT IN ANTI-GOM DEMONSTRATIONS WITH MALAYSIAN STUDENTS AND OTHER INCIDENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION OFFICER (SCOTT) TOLD EMBOFF NOV 29 THAT APPROX 10,000 AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO VISIT MALAYSIA DURING CURRENT UNIVERSITY LONG VACATION. SCOTT SAID THAT QUANTAS WILL OPERATE ABOUT 80 SPECIAL CHARTER FLIGHTS TO KL AND THAT MANY STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO VISIT SINGAPORE AND THAILAND AS WELL AS MALAYSIA. APPROX 400 AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS
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ARE IN MALAYSIA NOW, AND EMBASSY FEARS RASH OF POLITICAL AND

OTHER INCIDENTS AS STUDENTS MOVE AROUND COUNTRY.

3. SCOTT ADDED THAT LIKELY INFRACTIONS ARE NARCOTICS USE, HIPPIE-TYPE BEHAVIOR (FOR WHICH OVER 90 FOREIGN YOUTHS WERE EXPELLED FROM COUNTRY LAST MARCH), AND ANTI-GOM STATEMENTS AS RESULT OF WELL-KNOWN AUSTRALIAN STUDENT SYMPATHY WITH OVERSEAS MALAYSIAN STUDENTS REGARDING ALLEGED GOM POLITICAL REPRESSION. SOME VACATIONING AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS MAY SEEK TO TAKE PART IN OR STIMULATE CAMPUS DEMONSTRATIONS HERE ON VARIETY OF ISSUES. INCLUDING RISING COST OF LIVING, ATTEMPTS BY GOM TO PREVENT RADICALIZATION OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, AND DETENTION OF ALLEGED SUBVERSIVES WITHOUT TRIAL.

4. CONTINUING GOM SENSITIVITY ON POLITICAL INFLUENCES AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS OVERSEAS WAS REFLECTED IN STATEMENT OF EDUCATION MINISTER DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMED NOV 26 THAT STUDENTS WHO JOIN MILITANT COMMUNIST ORGANIZATIONS ABROAD WILL BE ARRESTED WHEN THEY RETURN HOME. SPEAKING TO MEETING OF EDUCATION MINISTRY OFFICIALS, MAHATHIR ALSO SAID STUDENTS GUILTY OF COMMUNIST ASSOCIATIONS WOULD BE ARRESTED EVEN IF THEY DID NOT COMMIT ANY CRIMINAL ACT IN COUNTRY IN WHICH THEY WERE STUDYING, BUT ONLY "HANDFUL" OF 7000 STUDENTS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND WERE INVOLVED IN SUCH ACTIVITIES. IN CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR NOV 27, MAHATHIR SAID HE IS UNHAPPY ABOUT AUSTRALIAN AND N.Z. STUDENTS WHO CRITICIZED GOM FOR REPRESSION OF STUDENTS OVERSEAS, LACK OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION HERE, AND DETENTION OF SUBVERSIVES WITHOUT TRIAL.

5. COMMENT: PRESENCE OF LARGE NUMBERS OF AUSTRALIAN STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA MAY ADD TO STUDENT FERMENT WHICH IN RECENT WEEKS HAS BEEN ON SLIGHT UPSWING DUE TO DEMONSTRATIONS BY AGRICULTURE STUDENTS (KL 5383), ANTI-SINGAPORE DEMO (KL 5273) AND STUDENT SYMPATHY WITH PLIGHT OF MALAY SMALLHOLDERS OVER INFLATION AND DECLINING RUBBER PRICES (KL 5647). DOUBTLESS THE AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIBP WILL HAVE ITS HANDS FULL EXTRACATING STUDENTS FROM MINOR SCRAPES, NOT TO MENTION POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.
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